

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Diane Thackrah
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	11 August 2009
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a children's home that is owned by a company that also own a number of other homes, mainly within the south east. The home provides care and accommodation for up to nine young people, of either sex, aged 8 years to 18 years, who present with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home is a large double fronted detached building, which is located on a residential road close to a town centre and the range of amenities provided there.

Nine young people are currently living in the home. Two young people contributed their views to this inspection.

Summary

At this unannounced key inspection, all key national minimum standards were assessed.

This is a good home, with satisfactory arrangements for economic well-being. Young people have their health promoted through the provision of good food and access to information about health promotion. Large quantities of cigarette butts in the back garden are not helpful in promoting a healthy lifestyle. Health needs are identified and met and changing needs are well monitored. Medication is generally handled safely, however, practice must be improved in relation to administration.

Young people are kept safe by staff. They have their privacy protected and are protected from bullying. Good child protection procedures are in place which safeguard young people. The positive relationships that exist between staff and young people support good behaviour management in the home. Young people think that they are treated fairly and say that good behaviour is rewarded. Young people live in a safe environment and are protected by robust staff recruitment policies and procedures.

Young people have good opportunities for having a say about their care and their views are taken seriously. Support is provided to ensure that young people are able to maintain positive contact with family members and friends where this is appropriate. Education is valued and promoted by staff, however, improved arrangements must be ensured to promote education for those excluded from school. Young people have good opportunities for engaging in social and leisure activities.

The home is maintained to an adequate standard with improvements currently being made. Improvements must be made to the standard of cleaning in the kitchen and in relation to graffiti on bedroom furniture. There is generally good organisation in the home. Staff are well supported and trained, there is good monitoring of quality and good record keeping. The manager must, however, make an application to become registered with Ofsted.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health is promoted through the provision of healthy meals. There is a varied menu and young people have good opportunities for learning to cook and to plan healthy eating. Meals are treated as social occasions, with staff and young people generally eating together.

Young people's health needs are identified and this helps to promote their good health. Comprehensive information about health needs are recorded in health plans and these are reviewed to ensure that changing health needs are met. Young people are registered with general practitioners and other relevant health professionals. Specialist health services are resourced where this is appropriate and staff liaise with these services appropriately in order to promote young people's well-being. Information about health promotion is made available to young people in the home. Staff also promote healthy lifestyle choices by talking to young people about these issues. Staff have been proactive in helping young people to stop smoking in some areas; however, the large number of cigarette butts discarded in the passage way in the back garden and not conducive to promoting no smoking.

Young people's health needs are met through, generally, good policies and procedures for handling medication and dealing with first aid. One young person has recently missed taking some medication due to staff oversight and this is potentially detrimental to their well-being, however, overall medication is well handled. Staff have training in first aid and medication handling. All medication entering and leaving the home is clearly recorded and accounted for. Records are maintained of medication that is administered to young people. Medication is held securely in the office and there are systems for monitoring medication handling. Stock checks occur for first aid supplies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's welfare is promoted through good policies and procedures in relation to privacy and confidentiality. Staff respect young people's privacy and ensure that information about them is held confidentially. Young people have the resources they need to be able to make contact with family members and friends in privacy. Complaints are taken seriously and handled appropriately. Young people and other stakeholders are provided with the information they need to be able to make a complaint, including to outside agencies and this ensures that any concerns they have will be heard. The home has clear policies and procedures in place regarding child protection that serve to safeguard young people. These include staff training and robust reporting systems. Young people are protected from bullying and say that bullying is not a major issue in the home. Staff aim to create a safe and open environment for young people to live in and there is a clear understanding in the home that staff will challenge any incidents of bullying.

There are systems in place for promoting the safety of young people who go missing from the home. These include reporting young people to the police and other relevant agencies. Detailed risk assessments are in place regarding young people who go missing and this ensures that staff members are clear about the actions they must take to keep young people safe. The good behaviour management arrangements that exist in the home promote young people's welfare

and help them to develop positive behaviour. Young people think that they are treated fairly and that sanctions are not over excessive. They give examples of being able to choose their own sanctions to help them learn from their mistakes. Good behaviour is rewarded and young people like this. Staff think that it is important that young people understand the consequences of their behaviour and use key work sessions to discuss this. Physical restraint is rarely used in the home, and done only as a last resort. Staff have been trained in positive behaviour management techniques.

Young people live in an environment that promotes their safety. There are good fire safety arrangements, which include the regular testing of fire safety equipment. Young people and staff members receive instruction about good fire safety practices and there are regular fire drills. Checks on the gas supply and electrical installation help to keep young people safe, as do regular building checks. Staff recruitment policies and procedures are robust and help to safeguard young people. Staffing files were not examined on this occasion. Recruitment files have been sampled for the organisation at an earlier date and no significant shortfalls were present.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people received individual support when they need it. Positive relationships are shared between staff and young people. There is a key worker system that promotes good relationships and provides a space for significant issues to be addressed. Young people are supported to maintain positive contact with their social workers and staff ensure that social workers are kept up to date regarding young people's progress.

Young people's educational needs are well supported and education is viewed as important. All young people are currently involved in formal education. Staff make good efforts to ensure that young people attend school and do well when they are there. There is good communication between the home and the educational establishments that the young people attend and this supports constancy in care. Staff attend education with young people if this is deemed beneficial to the young people's learning and welfare. Facilities within the home are conducive to study. All young people have a desk and chair in their bedroom and there is internet access and a good supply of books. The arrangements for supporting young people who are excluded from school could be improved in order to further promote the value of education.

Young people have good opportunities to engage in social and leisure activities. Individual interests are promoted by supporting young people to attend clubs and youth groups. Group activities out with the home are facilitated and there is an annual holiday. The skills mix of the staff group contributes to young people developing new skills and interests. Young people are encouraged to make suggestions about how they spend their leisure time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have their needs assessed and clearly detailed in a placement plan and this provides staff with the information they need to positively address these needs. Comprehensive information is detailed in case records including information about how young people's cultural, religious and racial needs will be met. A key worker system is in place to monitor each young person's placement plan. Regular reviews occur in order to monitor young people's needs and

development. This ensures that changing needs will be addressed. Young people are able to contribute their views at their reviews.

Young people are supported to maintain constructive contact with family members and friends. Staff monitor all contact and facilitate family meetings in line with care plans. There are good arrangements for ensuring that young people have a say in their care and in the way in which the home is run. Regular house meetings are facilitated and these give young people the opportunity to have a say about things including activities and the menu. The organisation also encourage young people to have a say about things that effect them at quarterly children's forums. The removal of a 'blanket ban' on trampolines at homes is an example of young people's views being listened to and taken seriously.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people receive good care that helps them prepare for adulthood. All young people undergo a skills assessment to help determine what skills they require support in. This assessment then forms the basis of a pathway plan. Staff support young people who are preparing to move on to develop a range of skills. These include menu planning, household chores and cooking. Staff also support young people to access appropriate education, training, work and housing.

The home is, on the whole, adequately furnished and decorated. The whole of the ground floor is currently being redecorated and refurbished. Young people's bedrooms are adequately furnished; however, there is some graffiti on some pieces of furniture. The home is clean in most parts, however, the kitchen floor would benefit from a more thorough clean as there is ingrained dirt and the oven, microwave and bottom shelf of the freezer should be more thoroughly cleaned to ensure good hygiene. There is some rubbish in the garden that makes it look untidy.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

This is ,generally, a well managed home. The current manager has, however, not yet made an application to become registered with Ofsted, in line with regulation. The promotion of equality and diversity in the home is good. Young people are treated as individuals and cultural, religious and racial needs are seen as important. There is a Statement of Purpose and young people's guide that sets out what the home intends to do. This ensures that stakeholders have the information they need about the home. The young people's guide gives young people information about their rights and responsibilities.

There is a competent staff team and staff are employed in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of current young people. Four care staff posts are vacant at present. The manager has made assurances that these posts are soon to be filled. There is a very good staff training and development programme, which helps staff to develop the skills they need to work effectively with young people. As well as mandatory training such as first aid, food hygiene and fire safety, staff have received training in areas such as drug awareness, sexuality and developing self-esteem. Staff also receive supervision, attend team meetings and are allocated time for handover sessions. This supports good practice and promotes consistency in care for young people. There are good systems in place for monitoring the quality of the service and there is good record keeping.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
13	ensure that any medication which is prescribed for a young person is administered as prescribed (Regulation 21 (2)(b))	4 March 2010
14	ensure that the routine of the home is organised so as to further young people's participation in education (particularly in relation to the activities available to young people who have been excluded from school) (Regulation 18 (1)(b))	7 April 2010
24	ensure that the home is suitably furnished (furniture does not have graffiti), is kept clean and the garden is kept tidy (Regulation 31 (2)(c)&(e))	7 April 2010
34	ensure that Ofsted is given notice of the person appointed to manage the home and the date on which the appointment is to take effect. (Regulation 7 (2)(a)&(b))	7 April 2010

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the policy and guidance on promoting the health of young people including the effects of smoking is implemented in practice (particularly in relation to large numbers of cigarette butts being discarded in the passage way in the back garden). (NMS 12)